

If you have any questions, please contact:

Notes:

**Information for Patients on Sotalol
for History of Atrial
Fibrillation/Flutter**

*VHA Pharmacy Benefits Management-
Strategic Healthcare Group and
Medical Advisory Panel*

This information is to help you understand why you have been given the medication, sotalol. It is also to help you to take sotalol safely.

Please ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about this information.

Why was I given sotalol?

- Sotalol is a medication that can be used if you have irregular heartbeats (also called atrial fibrillation) that are bothersome to you
- Sotalol can help your heart to beat normally
- It is important for you and your doctor to discuss whether your symptoms are bothersome enough to take sotalol. Since even though sotalol works to help prevent irregular heartbeats, in some patients, it can cause a different kind of abnormal heartbeat that can be dangerous and rarely cause death.

How can I safely take sotalol?

In order to help decrease your chance of the dangerous abnormal heartbeat, it is very important for you to:

- Take sotalol exactly as prescribed
- Take sotalol at the same time every day so your body gets an even amount of medication

Other important information:

- Make sure you have enough pills by getting your refills on time
- Never change the dose or stop taking sotalol unless your doctor tells you to
- If the doctor tells you to stop taking sotalol, you will be told how to slowly do this over a couple weeks
- If you miss a dose of sotalol, take the next dose at the usual time and NEVER double the next dose. If you do take more sotalol than prescribed, call your doctor right away. If you cannot reach your doctor you should go to the hospital emergency room and take your sotalol tablets with you.
- You will need to have regular tests to make sure the amount of medication continues to be right for you
- Sotalol can be taken with or without food
- If you are pregnant, you should discuss the safety of using sotalol with your doctor
- You should not be taking sotalol if you are nursing a child, this should be discussed with your doctor

What about my other medications?

It is important to tell your doctor or pharmacist the following:

- All the medications you are taking
- Any new medications or changes in your medication while taking sotalol
- Plans for taking any new over-the-counter medications

It is also important to do the following:

- Tell your healthcare providers (including the dentist, and before you have an operation) that you are taking sotalol
- Carry a list of all your medications, vitamins and herbal or dietary supplements with you
- If you are taking an aluminum or magnesium antacid you should take the antacid at least 2 hours after taking sotalol

Your doctor and pharmacist will review your medications to see if you are taking any that may increase your chances of having the dangerous abnormal heartbeat if taken with sotalol. These include medications to treat heart problems, depression and other mental problems, nighttime heartburn, asthma and infections.

Does sotalol have any side effects?

The most serious side effect is the potential for a dangerous abnormal heartbeat. Even though cases of this are rare, they can cause death.

The most common side effects are:

- Feeling tired
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Slow heartbeat

If you are worried that you have a side effect, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Call your VA doctor right away (or go to the emergency room if you cannot reach your doctor) if you have any of the following possible signs of a dangerous abnormal heart beat:

- Feel faint
- Become dizzy
- Have fast heartbeats

Also call your doctor if you have:

- Severe diarrhea
- Unusual sweating
- Vomiting
- Less appetite than normal
- More thirst than normal

(these may make you more likely to have the dangerous abnormal heartbeat)

You should **not** be taking sotalol if you have:

- Serious kidney problems or are on dialysis
- Lung disease including asthma, chronic bronchitis, or emphysema
- Symptoms of heart failure including shortness of breath or swelling of the ankles or feet
- A very slow heartbeat without a pacemaker